

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming system that allows players to play games via a plurality of remote player devices, said gaming system comprising:

5 a first gaming server that facilitates play of a first game by a player utilizing one of said remote player devices, said first gaming server comprising a controller that comprises a processor and a memory in which image data corresponding to a video image representing said first game is stored, said controller being programmed to facilitate play of said first game and said first game being one of the following games: poker, blackjack, slots, keno or bingo;

10 a second gaming server that facilitates play of a second game by a player utilizing one of said remote player devices, said second game being different than said first game, said second gaming server comprising a controller that comprises a processor and a memory in which image data corresponding to a video image representing said second game is stored, said controller of said second gaming server being programmed to facilitate play of said second game and said second game being one of the following games: poker, blackjack, slots, keno or bingo; and

15 20 a website server that is capable of being operatively coupled via the Internet to said remote player devices, said website server capable of being operatively coupled to said first and second gaming servers, said website server comprising:

25 a controller that comprises a processor and a memory; and

a network communications circuit coupled to said controller of said website server, said network communications circuit allowing data to be communicated between said controller of said website server and said remote player devices,

30 said controller of said website server being programmed to cause logon display data to be transmitted to one of said remote player devices via said network communications circuit when said one remote player device is operatively coupled to said website server,

said controller of said website server being programmed to cause player data received from said one remote player device to be stored in memory,

5           said controller of said website server being programmed to cause data representing a game selection display to be transmitted to said one remote player device, said game selection display comprising a first image representing said first game and a second image representing said second game,

10           said controller of said website server being programmed to receive data representing a game selection from said one remote player device,

15           said controller of said website server being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and said first gaming server if said player selected said first game for play, and

20           said controller of said website server being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and said second gaming server if said player selected said second game for play.

2.       A gaming system as defined in claim 1,

wherein said memory of said first gaming server stores image data representing an image of at least five playing cards if said first game comprises poker,

25       wherein said memory of said first gaming server stores image data representing an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said first game comprises slots,

          wherein said memory of said first gaming server stores image data representing an image of a plurality of playing cards if said first game comprises blackjack,

30       wherein said memory of said first gaming server stores image data representing an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said first game comprises keno, and

wherein said memory of said first gaming server stores image data representing an image of a bingo grid if said first game comprises bingo.

3. A gaming system as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller of said  
5 first gaming server comprises a plurality of processors capable of parallel operation.

4. A gaming system as defined in claim 1 wherein said first game and said second game are the same type of game.

10 5. A gaming system as defined in claim 4 wherein said first game comprises a single-hand poker game and wherein said second game comprises a multi-hand poker game.

15 6. A gaming system as defined in claim 1 wherein said controller of one of said gaming servers is programmed to encrypt data transmitted to said website server and wherein said controller of said website server is programmed to decrypt data received by said website server from one of said gaming servers.

20 7. A gaming system as defined in claim 1 wherein one of said controllers of one of said gaming servers is programmed to determine whether a data communication received by said one gaming server was transmitted by an authorized sender.

25 8. A gaming system as defined in claim 1,  
wherein said first game may be played exclusively via said first gaming server, wherein said controller of said first gaming server is not programmed to facilitate play of said second game, and wherein said memory of said first gaming server does not store image data corresponding to a video image representing said second game; and  
30 wherein said second game may be played exclusively via said second gaming server, wherein said controller of said second gaming server is not programmed to facilitate play of said first game, and wherein said memory of said second gaming

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server does not store image data corresponding to a video image representing said first game.

9. A website server, comprising:

a network communications circuit that allows data to be communicated between said website server and a plurality of remote player devices when said remote player devices are operatively coupled to said website server; and

a controller that controls the operation of said website server, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said controller being programmed to cause logon display data to be transmitted to one of said remote player devices via said network communications circuit when said one remote player device is operatively coupled to said website server,

said controller being programmed to cause player data received from said one remote player device to be stored in memory,

said controller being programmed to cause data representing a game selection display to be transmitted to said one remote player device, said game selection display comprising a first image representing a first game and a second image representing a second game,

said controller being programmed to receive data representing a game selection from said one remote player device,

said controller being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and a first gaming server that facilitates play of said first game if said player selected said first game for play, and

said controller being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and a second gaming server that facilitates play of said second game if said player selected said second game for play.

10. A website server as defined in claim 9 wherein said first image comprises a first icon and wherein said second image comprises a second icon and

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wherein said controller of said website server is programmed to cause data representing said first and second icons to be transmitted to said one remote player device.

5        11. A website server as defined in claim 9 wherein said controller comprises a plurality of processors capable of parallel operation.

10        12. A website server as defined in claim 9 wherein said first game and said second game are the same type of game.

15        13. A website server as defined in claim 12 wherein said first game comprises a single-hand poker game and wherein said second game comprises a multi-hand poker game.

20        14. A website server as defined in claim 9 wherein said controller is programmed to decrypt data received by said website server from one of said gaming servers.

25        15. A website server as defined in claim 9 wherein said controller is programmed to determine whether a data communication received by one of said gaming servers was transmitted by an authorized sender.

30        16. A website server, comprising:

a network communications circuit that allows data to be communicated between said website server and a plurality of remote player devices when said remote player devices are operatively coupled to said website server; and

a controller that controls the operation of said website server, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said controller being programmed to cause data prompting a game selection to be made to be transmitted to one of said remote player devices to prompt a player to select at least a first game or a second game;

said controller being programmed to receive game selection data representing a game selection from said one remote player device,

said controller being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and a first gaming server that facilitates play of said first game if said game selection data specifies said first game, and

said controller being programmed to facilitate data communication between said one remote player device and a second gaming server that facilitates play of said second game if said game selection data specifies said second game.

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17. A website server as defined in claim 16 wherein said controller comprises a plurality of processors capable of parallel operation.

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18. A website server as defined in claim 16 wherein said first game and said second game are the same type of game.

19. A website server as defined in claim 18 wherein said first game comprises a single-hand poker game and wherein said second game comprises a multi-hand poker game.

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20. A website server as defined in claim 16 wherein said controller is programmed to decrypt data received by said website server from one of said gaming servers.

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21. A website server as defined in claim 16 wherein said controller is programmed to determine whether a data communication received by one of said gaming servers was transmitted by an authorized sender.

22. A website controller that controls operation of a website, said controller comprising:

a processor;

a memory operatively coupled to said processor;

5 a first computer program portion stored in said memory that causes data prompting a game selection to be made to be transmitted to a remote player device to allow a first game or a second game to be selected via said remote player device;

10 a second computer program portion stored in said memory that causes game selection data representing a game selection that is received from said remote player device to be stored in memory;

15 a third computer program portion stored in said memory that facilitates data communication between said remote player device and a first gaming computer that facilitates play of said first game if said game selection data specifies said first game; and

a fourth computer program portion stored in said memory that facilitates data communication between said remote player device and a second gaming computer that facilitates play of said second game if said game selection data specifies said second game.

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23. A website controller as defined in claim 22 comprising a plurality of processors capable of parallel operation.

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24. A website controller as defined in claim 22 wherein said first game and said second game are the same type of game.

25. A website controller as defined in claim 24 wherein said first game comprises a single-hand poker game and wherein said second game comprises a multi-hand poker game.

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26. A website controller as defined in claim 22 additionally comprising a computer program portion stored in said memory that determines whether a data communication received by one of said gaming computers was transmitted to said website by an authorized sender.

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27. A method of operating a website computing apparatus, comprising:  
transmitting logon display data from said website computing apparatus to a remote player device over the Internet;  
receiving player data from said remote player device via the Internet;  
transmitting data representing a game selection display to said remote player device via the Internet, said game selection display comprising a first image representing a first game and a second image representing a second game;  
receiving game selection data representing a game selection from said remote player device via the Internet;  
facilitating data communication via the Internet between said remote player device and a first gaming computer that facilitates play of said first game if said game selection data represents said first game, said data communication being conducted through said website computing apparatus; and  
facilitating data communication via the Internet between said remote player device and a second gaming computer that facilitates play of said second game if said game selection data represents said second game, said data communication between said remote player device and said second gaming computer being conducted through said website computing apparatus.

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28. A method as defined in claim 27, additionally comprising:  
transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of at least five playing cards if said first game comprises poker,  
transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said first game comprises slots,

transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of playing cards if said first game comprises blackjack,

transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said first game comprises keno, or

5 transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a bingo grid if said first game comprises bingo.

29. A method of operating a website computing apparatus, comprising:

10 receiving at said website computing apparatus via the Internet game selection data representing a game selection from a player device remote from said website computing apparatus, said game selection data representing either a first game or a second game;

15 receiving at said website computing apparatus game display data from a first gaming apparatus that facilitates play of said first game if said game selection data represents said first game;

receiving at said website computing apparatus game display data from a second gaming apparatus that facilitates play of said second game if said game selection data represents said second game;

20 transmitting said game display data received from one of said gaming apparatuses to said remote player device via the Internet;

receiving at said website computing apparatus wager data from said remote player device via the Internet;

25 transmitting said wager data from said website computing apparatus to said first gaming apparatus if said game selection data represents said first game; and

transmitting said wager data from said website computing apparatus to said second gaming apparatus if said game selection data represents said second game.

INNOVATION POKER

30. A method as defined in claim 29, comprising:
  - transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of at least five playing cards if said first game comprises poker,
  - transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if said first game comprises slots,
  - transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of playing cards if said first game comprises blackjack,
  - transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a plurality of keno numbers if said first game comprises keno, or
  - transmitting to said remote player device display data representing an image of a bingo grid if said first game comprises bingo.

31. A method as defined in claim 29, wherein said first gaming apparatus comprises a first gaming server, wherein said second gaming apparatus comprises a second gaming server, and wherein said method comprises:

receiving at said website computing apparatus game display data from said first gaming server if said game selection data represents said first game; and

receiving at said website computing apparatus game display data from said second gaming server if said game selection data represents said second game.

32. A method as defined in claim 29, wherein said website computing apparatus comprises a website server and wherein said method comprises:

receiving at said website server via the Internet said game selection data from said player device; and

receiving at said website server said wager data from said remote player device via the Internet.

33. A method of operating a website computing apparatus, comprising:  
receiving at said website computing apparatus, via the Internet, game selection data representing a game selection from a player device remote from said website computing apparatus;

5 transmitting a data communication from said website computing apparatus to a first gaming apparatus that facilitates play of a first game if said game selection data represents said first game;

10 transmitting a data communication from said website computing apparatus to a second gaming apparatus that facilitates play of a second game if said game selection data represents said second game;

15 receiving at said website computing apparatus game display data from one of said gaming apparatuses;

transmitting said game display data from said website computing apparatus to said remote player device via the Internet;

20 receiving at said website computing apparatus wager data from said remote player device via the Internet;

transmitting said wager data from said website computing apparatus to said first gaming apparatus if said game selection data represents said first game; and

25 transmitting said wager data from said website computing apparatus to said second gaming apparatus if said game selection data represents said second game.

34. A method as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising:

25 transmitting logon display data from said website computing apparatus to said remote player device via the Internet; and

receiving player data from said remote player device via the Internet.

30 35. A method as defined in claim 33, wherein said first gaming apparatus comprises a server computer programmed with computer program instructions that

facilitate play of said first game and wherein said method comprises receiving game display data from said server computer.

36. A method as defined in claim 33, wherein said website computing apparatus comprises a website server and wherein said method comprises:

5 receiving at said website server said game selection data from said remote player device via the Internet;

10 receiving at said website server said game display data from one of said gaming apparatuses; and

15 receiving at said website server said wager data from said remote player device via the Internet.

37. A method of operating a gaming apparatus, comprising:

20 transmitting first game display data from said gaming apparatus to a website computing apparatus, said first game display data representing a first game image relating to a game that may be played via a player device that is remote from said website computing apparatus and that is remote from said gaming apparatus, said first game display data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device;

25 receiving wager data from said website computing apparatus, said wager data being included in a data communication having a source address that specifies said player device;

transmitting second game display data from said gaming apparatus to said website computing apparatus, said second game display data representing a second game image relating to said game, said second game display data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device; and

30 transmitting outcome data from said gaming apparatus to said website computing apparatus, said outcome data representing an outcome of said game, said outcome data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device.

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38. A method as defined in claim 37 additionally comprising:  
encrypting said first game display data prior to transmitting said first  
game display data from said gaming apparatus to said website computing  
apparatus; and  
5 encrypting said second game display data prior to transmitting said  
second game display data from said gaming apparatus to said website computing  
apparatus.

10 39. A method as defined in claim 37 additionally comprising decrypting said  
wager data after receiving said wager data from said website computing apparatus.

15 40. A method as defined in claim 37 wherein said website computing  
apparatus comprises a website server and wherein said method comprises:

- transmitting said first game display data from said gaming apparatus to  
said website server;  
receiving said wager data from said website server;  
transmitting said second game display data from said gaming apparatus  
to said website server; and  
transmitting said outcome data from said gaming apparatus to said  
website server.  
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25 41. A method as defined in claim 37 wherein said gaming apparatus  
comprises a gaming server and wherein said method comprises:

- transmitting said first game display data from said gaming server to said  
website computing apparatus;  
transmitting said game display data from said gaming server to said  
website computing apparatus; and  
transmitting said outcome data from said gaming server to said website  
computing apparatus.  
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42. A gaming controller, comprising:
- 5           a processor;
- 10           a memory operatively coupled to said processor;
- 15           a first computer program portion stored in said memory that causes first game display data to be transmitted from said gaming controller to a website computing apparatus, said first game display data representing a first game image relating to a game that may be played via a player device that is remote from said website computing apparatus and that is remote from said gaming apparatus, said first game display data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device;
- 20           a second computer program portion stored in said memory that causes wager data to be received from said website computing apparatus, said wager data being included in a data communication having a source address that specifies said player device;
- 25           a third computer program portion stored in said memory that causes second game display data to be transmitted from said gaming controller to said website computing apparatus, said second game display data representing a second game image relating to said game, said second game display data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device; and
- a fourth computer program portion stored in said memory that causes outcome data to be transmitted from said gaming controller to said website computing apparatus, said outcome data representing an outcome of said game, said outcome data being included in a data communication having a destination address that specifies said player device.